

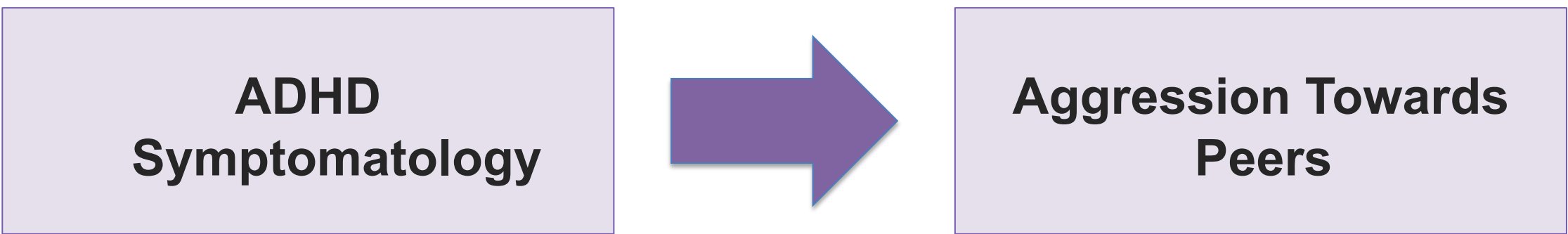


The Relation Between ADHD Symptomatology and Aggressive Behaviors in 4-year-olds

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INTRODUCTION

- Given the high prevalence of social impairments in children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), it is important to understand how ADHD symptomatology relates to children’s social interactions observed in a lab setting.
- The three major symptoms of ADHD include inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.
- Children who are high on ADHD symptomatology may have difficulty controlling their negative emotional responses and motor behaviors, which may result in aggressive behaviors towards peers.
- We hypothesized that children with higher ADHD symptomatology will show more aggression towards unfamiliar peers in the lab.



PARTICIPANTS

- 207 4-year old children (52% female)
- This data is from an ongoing longitudinal study investigating the impact of infant temperament on adolescent mental health.

METHODS

ADHD SYMPTOMATOLOGY

ADHD symptomatology was measured using ADHD Scale of the Child Behavior Checklist (6 Items).

Examples of Items (0-2 Scale):

- Can’t concentrate, can’t pay attention for long.
- Quickly shifts from one activity to another.
- Can’t sit still, restless, or hyperactive.
- Can’t stand waiting; wants everything now.

AGGRESSION

Observed in the lab during an unstructured free play task with an unfamiliar peer.

Observed Indicators (1-7 Scale):

- Threatening language or behaviors with intention to harm peer either physically or emotionally

This includes:

- Object struggles
- Threatening remarks
- Physical actions



RESULTS

We conducted regression analysis to test our hypothesis.

Regression Results on Aggression

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Significance
	Beta	SE	Beta	p
(Constant)	1.481	0.204		0.00
ADHD Symptomatology at 4 years	0.101	0.039	0.177	0.011
Gender (1=male)	0.705	0.204	0.238	0.001

The regression results indicated that ADHD symptomatology was positively related to aggression toward unfamiliar peers ($\beta = 0.177$, $p = 0.011$), even after accounting for gender differences with boys showing more aggression than girls ($\beta = 0.238$, $p = 0.001$).

DISCUSSION

- Our findings suggest that children with higher ADHD symptomatology show more aggression towards peers in the lab.
- This may explain why children with ADHD encounter social problems at school, such as peer rejection and poor friendship qualities.
- Due to ADHD symptomatology, children may have difficulty controlling their negative emotions, and therefore express more aggressive tendencies towards peers.
- Decreasing children’s aggression with unfamiliar peers may be a viable strategy in preventing social impairments in children with high ADHD symptomatology.
- A strength of this study was that we measured ADHD symptomatology using a parent report and aggression was observed in the lab.
- Aggressive behavior was only observed in lab. Future studies should assess aggression in school settings as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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